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Viewing cable 09QUITO246, GOE EXPLAINS HIGH LEVEL TRIP TO WASHINGTON

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09QUITO246**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09QUITO246	2009-04-07 20:03	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Quito

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/04/07/1/1355/cable-201261.html>

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0246/01 0972003
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 072003Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0240
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 8087
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 4139
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3492
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ APR LIMA 3143
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 4252
RHEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

S E C R E T QUITO 000246

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TWENTY YEARS
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [PINR](#) [MARR](#) [KCOR](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: GOE EXPLAINS HIGH LEVEL TRIP TO WASHINGTON

REF: QUITO 103

Classified By: Ambassador Heather Hodges for reason 1....

id: 201261
date: 4/7/2009 20:03
refid: 09QUITO246
origin: Embassy Quito
classification: SECRET//NOFORN
destination: 09QUITO103
header:
VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0246/01 0972003
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 072003Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0240
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 8087
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 4139
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3492
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RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 4252
RHEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

----- header ends -----

S E C R E T QUITO 000246

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TWENTY YEARS
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [PINR](#) [MARR](#) [KCOR](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: GOE EXPLAINS HIGH LEVEL TRIP TO WASHINGTON

REF: QUITO 103

Classified By: Ambassador Heather Hodges for reason 1.4 (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: FM Falconi and Government Minister Jalkh on April 6 expressed concern to the Ambassador about an Embassy official's meeting with unsavory characters, and said that President Correa had asked a delegation to go to Washington to express GOE concern. The Ambassador made clear that the meeting in question was one of many that Embassy officers conduct and that we had not initiated it. She suggested the meeting was possibly an attempt to frame the Embassy official by someone wanting to create distance between our governments, and urged the GOE to investigate further. The GOE officials appeared willing to accept the Ambassador's version of events. Jalkh reported the Ecuadorians were well received in Washington. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Ambassador met with FM Fander Falconi, Government Minister Gustavo Jalkh, Coordinating Minister for Internal and External Security Miguel Carvajal, Vice FM Lautaro Pozo, and MFA Under Secretary Jorge Orbe on April 6 at the MFA's request. DCM and PolCouns also attended.

FOREIGN MINISTER'S EXPLANATION OF TRIP

¶3. (C) FM Falconi prefaced his remarks by stressing the GOE's interest in a constructive dialogue with the U.S. on political, environmental, migration, and other matters. He conveyed President Correa's "affectionate greetings" to the Ambassador. Falconi then turned to what he called the delicate subject of intelligence indicating that an Embassy official had been involved in questionable meetings, which was a matter of grave concern for the GOE. He said President Correa decided to send a delegation, consisting of Government Minister Jalkh, Vice FM Pozo, and Ecuador's three ambassadors in the U.S., to discuss the matter directly with Washington. The GOE delegation's objective was to stress that the

Ecuadorian individuals were not appropriate people for the Embassy to see, and to request an in-depth investigation. Falconi described the delegation's meetings with WHA A/S Shannon, the NSC, and various Members and staffers in Congress as positive, saying the interlocutors indicated that Washington also wanted a climate of confidence between the two governments.

AMBASSADOR EXPLAINS EMBASSY ACTIONS

¶4. (C) The Ambassador responded that she accepted that Correa had decided to conduct this diplomacy in Washington, but considered it unfortunate that the GOE had not spoken with her first. She emphasized that neither she nor any official of the Embassy had an interest in overthrowing the government or interfering in the election. To the contrary, we want stability under the elected government. The Ambassador noted that she had been very careful in her dealings with the opposition.

¶5. (S) The Ambassador acknowledged that some Embassy officials speak with disreputable individuals, explaining that this happens here in Quito and in our other embassies, because these are the people who can provide information about drug trafficking, human smuggling, or other subjects. When we obtain useful information, our law enforcement agencies share it with the GOE, for instance the Ecuadorian police, and with the Manta Forward Operating Location if it is a case where aerial surveillance could locate the vessel. Coast Guard attaché Heath Brown had received information with some validity in the past from one of the individuals in the photographs the GOE presented in Washington, Camilo Rodas. This time Rodas called to suggest a meeting with his cousin, Cao Lay Munoz.

¶6. (S) In this instance, Brown misunderstood Cao Lay Munoz's name and wrote it as Caoli Munoz, thus embassy checks on the name prior to the meeting revealed nothing. The Ambassador showed Falconi the internal Embassy entry request form where Brown had misspelled the name. She added that if Brown had nefarious ends in mind, he would not have met at the Embassy where Rodas and Munoz could easily be observed entering. She emphasized that even though Munoz was well known to the GOE, there were many people at the U.S. Embassy who would not have recognized the name.

¶7. (S) The Ambassador read an account of the meeting, which also included an assistant Embassy security officer. She cautioned that she in no way intended to say that the statements by Munoz were accurate. Munoz described himself to the Embassy officials as having assisted past governments, and more recently former president Lucio Gutierrez, by paying people off. Munoz stated that he was thrown in jail last year after he refused to assist the government in framing Gutierrez without payment, and was warned by presidential security to keep quiet after his release this year. Munoz claimed he approached the Embassy because he thought the U.S. did not want Correa to win the April 26 election. He referred to Chavez as the "big rat" and Correa as the "little rat," urging the U.S. to take care or the continent would be full of rats. (This caused Falconi to flinch; he later called the "bad rats" language inconsistent with the GOE's commitment and achievements.) Munoz claimed to have

additional information against Correa, and asked protection and safe travel to the U.S. if he went to the press.

¶8. (S) The Ambassador explained that Brown told Rodas and Munoz that he would call them if he was interested in the information. She described how Brown escorted Rodas and Munoz out of the Embassy building, where Rodas told Brown that someone else who claimed to have information on the Ostaiza brothers (reftel) wanted to talk to him on Rodas' cell phone. This likely allowed Brown to be photographed. Since then, Brown has twice told Rodas that he had no interest in his information.

DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS

¶9. (C) Government Minister Jalkh jumped in to say that the Ambassador might see such meetings as a daily event, but in the context of actions that caused the GOE to expel two Embassy officers and the upcoming election, it was of grave concern to the GOE. He noted that Ecuador appreciated A/S Shannon's promise to investigate. Vice FM Pozo insisted that the Embassy should have known Munoz's background. The Ambassador made clear that she herself would not have known, since there was nothing in the press since her arrival, and neither did Brown.

¶10. (C) Coordinating Minister Carvajal said that the Embassy version of the incident was completely different than the GOE understanding. He said he was told Munoz had planned to publicize the information on CNN. Carvajal suggested that "certain interests" might want to create a provocation. He said it would be prudent when the Embassy received information of this type for it to tell the GOE directly to protect them from the interests of third parties. The Ambassador emphasized that it would not be worth passing all information, but that we do inform the police of the information we consider useful and credible.

¶11. (S) The Ambassador inquired if the GOE had audio of Brown speaking with Munoz and Rodas. Both Carvajal and Jalkh admitted they did not. Carvajal explained that the Ecuadorian Embassy in Washington's original request for DVD equipment was an erroneous assumption on its part. The Ambassador reiterated that she had no way to investigate further since she had already explained the extent of the Embassy's involvement. If indeed the operation was a setup, then it would appear the GOE needed to do more investigation. Those Ecuadorians present appeared to agree. The Ambassador requested that the facts she had shared be conveyed to President Correa. Jalkh said Correa had already been informed.

¶12. (C) Jalkh suggested that an opportunity could be made out of this crisis. While recognizing the value of USG cooperation on counternarcotics, he urged a better balance between U.S. relations with Colombia and with Ecuador, complaining that the U.S. saw Colombia as fighting against the drug trade despite continued extensive cultivation of drug crops, but did not appreciate Ecuador's efforts. However, many of the U.S. interlocutors in Washington had made an effort to learn about the situation and recognized GOE efforts.

COMMENT

¶13. (S/NF) Part one of this meeting focused on Falconi laying out that Correa had ordered the delegation to Washington. This struck us as a quasi-apology/explanation of why they did not come to the Embassy first. It looks as if the GOE wanted us to see why they viewed the meeting as "inappropriate" and "serious," but they also seemed to acknowledge that our perception could be different. Whether it is an excuse, we do not know, but they also seemed ready to believe this was a deliberate setup by someone (perhaps the opposition, although they did not say so) to provoke President Correa to expel another diplomat and drive the bilateral relationship to a crisis.

HODGES

=====CABLE ENDS=====